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AUTHOR	Dobbs, Olivett
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ABSTRACT

Content area reading instruction includes two elements: the information presented in subject matter text, and the plan that teachers use to help students understand the content. According to research and interviews with social studies teachers, there is a high failure rate in the social studies content area because children have problems understanding text material, poor study skills, and lack of motivation. Strategies can help teachers participate in as well as facilitate students' learning. Teachers should become familiar with learning styles of students, since knowing how students learn can help the content area teacher plan instruction to help student improve their comprehension and learning. This paper provides a social studies lesson outline. It first outlines four strategies for activating prior knowledge: DRTA (Directed Reading/Thinking Activity); KWL (What I Know, Want to Learn, Learn); Anticipation Guide; and Problematic Situations. It next outlines strategies for vocabulary development: Semantic Mapping; Context Clues; and Sentence Completion. It then outlines how to preview the text for organization, offering examples of Chronological Sequence; Comparison and Contrast; Generalization Principal; and Process Cause Effect. The paper also outlines activities that focus on metacomprehension strategies, including Making Predictions; Confirming or Revising; Proposition/Support; Reciprocal Teaching; Summarizing; Questioning; Clarifying; Note Taking; and Think Alouds. It concludes by suggesting post-reading activities: Semantic Mapping; Support Outline; Search Strategy; Concept Question Chain; Learning Logs; Writing to Learn; Discussion Webs; and Summarizing. (Contains 25 references.) (NKA)

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Using Reading Strategies To Reduce The Failure Rate In The Content Area

Subject: Social Studies
Grade Level: 6-7-8

Course: The Administration and Supervision of Reading Proograms

Olivett Dobbs

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Reading Strategies To Reduce The Failure Rate In The Content Area

What is Content Area Reading Instruction?

Content area reading instruction includes two elements: the information that is presented in subject matter text, and the plan that teachers use to help students understand the content. Recent research indicates that learning and reading are active process. Effective readers, make predictions, organize information, and interact with the text.

Why do children fail in the content area?

According to research and interviews with social studies teachers, and the school counselor, there is a high failure rate in the content area because children have problems understanding text material, poor study skills and lack of motivation.

Social Studies teachers can use different strategies that will help students become effective readers, and make sense of the text. Strategies can help teachers be a participant as well as a facilitator in the students learning. Students will benefit from strategies they can employ on their own with very little difficulty and begin to monitor their reading, and know how to monitor their reading behaviors, when they have problems understanding what they read. Strategies will also help the student think about what they are reading, create mental pictures, and ask questions.

Before applying reading strategies, teachers should become familiar with learning styles of the students, because it's important for reading to be tailored to the students needs and interest. Knowing how students learn can help the content area teacher plan instruction that will help students improve their comprehension and learning.

Some of the long term effects of using strategies to improve student learning in the content area, includes fewer drop outs, few suspensions, and better grades in the middle and high school.

Making Sense of the Text
Using Reading Strategies

Social Studies Lesson Outline

1. Determine your objective for the lesson. What do you want your students to know or be able to do at the end of the lesson?

2. Select a strategy for assessing students prior knowledge of the general topic.

Examples:

Strategies for activating prior knowledge:

DRTA- Directed Reading/ Thinking Activity
KWL- What I know, Want To Learn, Learn
Anticipation Guide
Problematic Situations

Strategy: Anticipation Guide / Prediction Guide

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Anticipation and prediction guides can be used to activate and assess students prior knowledge, to focus on reading, and to motivate readers by stimulating their interest in the topic. The guide reveals around the text's most important concepts, Students should be able to pay attention and focus on important information. These guides promote active reading and critical thinking. (Herber 1978)	1. Identify the major concepts that students should learn from reading. 2.Determine ways these concepts might support or challenge the students beliefs. 3.Create statements that support or challenge the students beliefs and experience about the topic under study. 4.Share the guide with students, and have them react to each statement, by responding and defending their responses. 5.Discuss the statements with the class, and see how students agree or disagree with each statement.	1. The teacher can assess the students on the following: 1.Their ability to react to statements based on their beliefs and experiences. 2.Their ability to understand the topic concepts. 3. Their ability to formulate their own responses.

DR/TA Directed Reading /Thinking Activity

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
The Directed reading/Thinking Activity is similar to the KWL concept. It encourages active reading through activation of prior knowledge, predicting and checking the accuracy of predictions.(Stauffer,1969)	1. Have students preview the text selection, noting the title and subheadings .From this preview let students complete the first three sections of the DR/TA form.They should write down what they know about the subject, what they think they know about it, and what they think they will learn from reading the text. The first two sections help students focus on the topic while the third selection requires the student to make predictions. 2. Have students read the text selection confirming or rejecting their earlier prediction ,and refine their prediction as new material is read. 3.After students complete their reading, have them complete the last section of the form, what do you know you learned?	Teacher will assess the students on the following: 1.After the teacher assign the students a topic in the social studies text, she will have them write a paragraph about what they learned. 2.DR/TA form

Strategy: What I Know, Want To Learn, Learned (kwl)

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
KWL Is a strategy that helps students predict and connect new information with prior knowledge.It can be used to brainstorm prior knowledge, to preview vocabulary and concepts, and help students recall what they have read.	1. The teacher draws three columns on the board.The students can use their own prepared forms. 2.During the first phase of the strategy,students brainstorm about what they know, or think they know about the topic. 3. Next students list what want to know about the topic. 4.Students then read the chapter because they want to discover answers for the questions they have posed.The last step is for students to identify what they learned.	1. Given a topic in social studies the students can do a running summary. 2. Have students reflect on what they liked about using the KWL strategy, and how they can use it in other context.

Strategy: Pre-reading Plan (PREP)

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
The pre-reading plan provides a framework for activating and extending prior knowledge.	1. Identify the central concept in the selection and introduce it to the students by saying, What comes to your mind when you hear the word region? 2. Individually, have students write all of their associations , and on the chalkboard make a list of all their responses. 3.Students should reflect on why each association was made, by asking what made you think of the north. 4.Complete the activity by saying, as a result of our discussion can you think of any other information that you know about this topic.	The teacher can assess the students with their individual responses, when they are able to link other words to the word region.

Strategy: Problematic Situation

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Problematic situations is a strategy that activates what students already know about the topic, it motivates students to read the text, and helps them focus on the main ideas, presented in the text as they read. It can be used with any text that deals with a problem/ solution relationship.	1. Create a problematic situation similar to the on that's presented in the social studies text. Give students enough information about the situation to help them focus on key ideas. Clearly define the context of the problem. 2. Social Studies: Students learning about The Cuban missile crisis might be presented with the following dilemma: You are president of the United States and have just been informed by the CIA that your archenemy has been installing offensive neuclearwarheads in a small country sixty miles away from the U.S.. Based on your knowledge of the cold war what steps would you take in this situation. 3.Pose the problems to the students in cooperative groups, have them come up with possible solutions. Have groups record their responses.	1.Teacher will assess students on their ability to solve problems. 2. Their ability to locate key ideas in the passage.

II.Strategies for Vocabulary Development.

1. Preview the text material for vocabulary.

2. Identify critical vocabulary.

3. Select vocabulary strategies appropriate for the social studies lesson.

Examples:

1. Semantic Mapping
2. Context Clues
3. Sentence Completition

Strategy: Semantic Mapping

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Semantic mapping, its purpose is to depict the relationships among key concepts and related technical terms in a text passage. It helps with vocabulary students may encounter during reading.	1. Write on the board a key concept from the unit you have just completed. List a number of related concepts and technical terms.Next create a web for the terms you have listed. Group the terms into categories. Label each and write the terms under the appropriate category. 2. When students understand the semantic mapping strategy, put a key concept from the lesson on the board. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm as many related words as hey can think of. 3.The semantic maps created by the small groups are shared to create one large map on the board.	Using the semantic map the teacher will assess the following: Students ability to generate related words and concepts. Students ability to classify the words into groups.

Strategy: Word Meaning From Context

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
This strategy help students analyze word meaning from context. Sometimes you can understand the new word because it is included in a list or group of words that you do know. The word you know becomes the context of the new word. They can help you infer the meaning of the new word.	1.Assign students a passage to read. 2.Share key vocabulary terms with the students prior to reading. 3.Write the actual sentence in which the word appears. 4.Based on how the word is used in the sentence, write down a prediction about its meaning. 5.Find the actual definition of the word. Write down that definition. 5. Show your understanding of the words meaning by using it in your own sentence.	Teacher will assess the students by: Their ability to connect the word with something similar that they heard. Their ability to find the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the sentence context.

Concept Definition Mapping

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Concept Definition Mapping is a strategy for teaching students the meaning of key concepts. Students must describe what the concept is, as well as what it isn't and give examples of it. The mapping process also aids recall.	1. On the board display an example of a concept definition map. 2.Discuss questions that a definition should answer. What is it? What is it like? What are some examples of it? 3.Select a familiar vocabulary term from a previous unit and map its features. 4.Select another term, and have students volunteer information for the map. 6. Have students work in pairs to complete the map for a concept in their current lesson. 7.After students complete their map , have them write a complete definition of the concept, using the information from the map.	Teacher will assess students on the following: 1.Students ability to complete a map for a concept in the current lesson. 2.Students ability to use their background knowledge to complete a map.

III. Preview The Text For Organization

Determine the organizational patterns used in the text. Authors of informational text select from a number of organizational patterns to express the relationships among their important and less important ideas. Each has its own distinctive characteristics that appear across content area.

Examples:

1.Chronological Sequence
2.Comparison and Contrast
3.Generalization Principal
3.Process Cause Effect

Strategy: Chronological Sequence

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Chronological Sequence organizes events in a time sequence.	1.The teacher will describe the sequence of events. 2.What are the major incidents that occur? 3. How is this pattern revealed in the text?	1. Have students to locate the earliest and latest time periods covered in the social studies lesson. 2. Have students trace the sequence of events over an extended period with a time line. 3.Students should be able to explain where additional events could be placed on the time line.

Strategy: Comparison and Contrast

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Comparison and contrast organizes information about two or more topics according to their similarities and differences.	1. Students should know the items that are being compared. 2. What is it about the items that are being compared? 3. What characteristics do they have in common, how are these items alike? In what way are these items different?	The teacher will assess the students on the following: 1Have students create a chart comparing and contrasting the history of the United States and Canada. 2. Students should describe the ways in which the growth, settlement, and achievement of independence were similar and ways in which they were different.

Strategy: Generalization Principle

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Generalization / principle organizes information into general statements with supporting examples,	1,The student should know what generalization the author is making and what principle is being explained. 2.Students should know what facts, examples, statistics, and expert opinion are given that support the generalization. 3. Do these details appear in a logical order? 4.Are enough facts examples, statistics, and expert opinion included to clearly support or explain the principle.	1.Teacher will assess the students on the following: Students ability to organize information into a general statement with supporting details.

Strategy: Process / Cause-Effect

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
1.Process cause- effect: organizes information into a series of steps leading to a specific product; or organizes information in a casual sequence that leads to a specific outcome,	1.Students should know what process or topic is being explained. 2.Students should know what the specific steps in the process, or what specific causal events occur. 3.Stuents should know the product or end result of the process; or what is the outcome of the casual events.	1.Teacher will assess the students with the following: 1. Have students complete a two column cause and effect chart showing that the arrival of Europeans caused Native Americans life to change. 2.Have students use a cause effect graphic organizer and show that a causal event must do more than occur before an effect- it must cause the effect.

IV. Activities That Focus On Metacomprehension Strategies

Select during reading questions and activities that focus on metacomprehension strategies. When students focus on their reading process, their metacomprehension will improve.

Examples:

1. Making Predictions
2. Confirming or Revising
3. Proposition / Support
4. Reciprocal Teaching
5. Summarizing
6. Questioning
7. Clarifying
8. Note Taking
9. Think Alouds

Strategy: Reciprocal Teaching

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Reciprocal teaching is a strategy in which students learn the skills of summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting well enough to perform as an instructor of content. When students learn these four skills, they not only instruct one another but they learn metacomprehension skills they can use while reading independently.	1.Explain to students the concept of reciprocal teaching, that we learn best what we have to teach to others. 2.Identify the four strategies students will learn to help their classmates comprehend and remember what they read. • Summarizing • Questioning • Clarifying • Predicting 3.The teacher should model for the students how to summarize, generate questions, clarify confusing text and predict. Allow the students enough time to practice each skill. 4.After the students practice each skill. shift the responsibility for directing the discussion to the student. 5. Have students take turns being student teacher for each group..	1. The teacher can assess the student on their ability to teach a social studies lesson to a small group. 2.Students ability to apply each skill to the lesson.

Strategy: Think Alouds

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluations
To help students understand the kind of thinking required by a specific task. The teacher models her thinking process by verbalizing her thoughts as she reads, processes information, or performs some learning task. Think alouds make invisible mental processes visible to students. While reading the teacher voices all the things they are noticing, doing seeing, feeling, and asking as they process the text.(Wilhelm 2000)	1.Select a passage to read aloud that contains parts that students might find difficult, or unknown vocabulary terms. Develop questions to ask yourself that will show what you think as you confront these problems while reading. 2.Students should read the selection silently, while you read it aloud. As you read verbalize your thoughts, the questions you develop and the process for solving comprehension problems. 3.Have students work with partners to practice think alouds when reading short selections of the social studies text.	Teacher can assess students on the following: 1.Have students read aloud and imitate the teacher. 2.Have students ask questions as they read the text.

Strategy: Group Summarizing

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Class summaries help learners review and remember information. Summarizing information requires that readers distinguish between key concepts and subordinate ideas. It also requires the ability to condense information.	1. Have students survey the text passage to identify major topics on which to focus while reading. For example if the reading is to be about landforms and the subheading are hills, valleys mountains, plateaus. The subheadings will become the cues students will use in their summaries. 2. Next divide the chalkboard into four parts label the sections hills, valleys, mountains,plateaus. These sections provide the student with a purpose for reading. 3.After the student read the text, ask the class to give information for each of the categories on the board. Record the information in sentence form. Students need to understand which concepts are most important and how they can be stated clearly.	Teacher will access students on the following: 1.Students ability to record information under each category. 2. Students ability to choose the important concepts, and state them clearly.

Strategy: Questioning

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Most content text have large global questions and smaller clarification questions. Differentiating between large global questioning and smaller clarification questions can sometimes present a problem in a content area.	1.Select a passage that has a thick question.Thick questions are those that address large universal concepts and often begin with why? How come? I wonder. 2. Explain to students that they address large content areas such as what is hydroelectricity? Explain to students, that the answer to these questions are often longer and require further discussion and research. 3.The teacher will select a passage that has a thin question. 4.The teacher will explain to the students that thin questions are those primarily asked to clarify confusion, understand words, or access objective content. Questions that can be answered with a number, a simple yes or no. 5. The teacher can give an example of a thin question, how many states are there in the United States? The answers are shorter than those for thick questions.	Teacher can assess the students on the following: 1.Ask the students questions that can be answered with yes or no. Ask them questions that begin with why? How come? See if students can identify thick and thin questions. 2.Provide students with a graphic organizer that has two columns write thick and thin questions in each column, give the students a code they can use for thick questions and thin questions. Make sure the students understand the code before attempting to answer the questions. Different color sticky notes can be used for codes.

Strategy: Sensory Imagery

Purpose	How to Use It	Evaluation
Comprehension, recall, and retention can be enhanced through sensory imaging while reading. Imagining what something looks like, feel like or taste can become a way to connect new information to prior knowledge, Using this strategy in content area reading can stimulate interest in reading and learning.	1. Have the students read a passage that contain some type of sensory detail. 2.Read the passage aloud to the students, stop and ask students to imagine the scene, for example the rainforest in Brazil. Ask the students have you ever seen a rainforest, maybe on TV? How did it look? Give students time to answer the question. Continue to prompt students to visualize the scene. 3.Select another passage for the students to read aloud, then have the students to discuss their images. 4.Ask students what they discovered using their imagination while reading.	1. Teacher can assess the students when they: Share their experiences about the rainforest. Answer questions about using their imagination.

Strategy: Structured Note Taking

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Structured note taking helps students take notes more effective. Having a note taking system help students to recall important information. It also offers a visual framework that help students select important information. (Goudvis, A. 2002).	1. Give students a short passage from the social studies text, and a graphic organizer, walk them through the process for taking notes. 2,Assign a passage from the social studies text, from which students can take notes. 3. Give each student a graphic organizer. Include major headings as Native Americans, so that students can put subordinate ideas on the graphic. 4.Have students construct their own graphics, but leave their boxes empty for them to fill in.	Teacher will assess the students on the following: 1.Taking notes without writing complete sentences. 2.Picking the most important information. 3.Keep notes short enough to remember the information at a later time.

V. Post Reading Activities

Select post - reading questions and activities that will help students meet the lesson objectives, reflect on what they have learned, and revise existing schema.

Examples:

1. Semantic Mapping
2. Support Outline
3. Search Strategy
4. Concept Question Chain
5. Learning Logs
6. Writing To Learn
7. Discussion Webs
8. Summarizing

Strategy: Learning Logs

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Learning logs is one of the most effective means of writing to learn. They foster reflection on either text content of students reading and learning processes. Learning logs focus on content covered in class, not student personal and private feelings. When students reflect on how they feel, it should be in relation to what was studied in class.	1. Select the concept students will learn. 2.A learning log entry can be assigned at any time during class discussion. 3. Assign the topic and give students three to five minutes think time to consider their response. 4. Have students write for five minutes on the topic. 5.Log entries can be rewritten if the student ideas change.	1.Teacher can access the student with the following: 1.The student response to the topic. 2.The student understanding of the content covered in class..

Strategy: Writing To Learn

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
Writing to learn is a method that can be incorporated across the curriculum. It helps students personalize learning so that they understand their subject better and retain what they have learned longer. Writing to learn activities can be used to help students reflect on and explore ideas and concepts they are reading about in class , helping students to construct meaning. Writing activities should be brief, and can be assigned at any point during the class change.	1.Select the concept you want students to explore. 2.Assign the writing activity at any time during class. 3.Students should reflect on or apply what they are learning. 4.Assign the topic and give student five minutes think time to consider their response. 5.Allow students five minutes to write on the topic.	Teacher will access the student o the following: 1.Students will be assessed on their responses based on the thought shown.

Strategy: Search Strategy

Purpose	How To Use It	Evaluation
The Search Strategy is used when students are asked to research a topic. The project should focus on a question to be answered rather than a general topic. This strategy will stimulate students to find answers to questions they have generated from their reading.	1. Students will select a topic of interest. 2.Have students think about what they know, think they know and want to know about the subject. 3.Give the student a KWL organizer. Have students work individually and then in small groups to generate ideas. Write ideas in all three categories. Ask questions to raise curiosity. 4. Read student material to verify what they know and think they know. 5. Have students share their responses in small groups. 6. Have a large group discussion to share leanings as wellas new questions.	Teacher will access students on their : 1.Individual responses. 2. Ability to generate ideas. 3 .Responses in small groups.

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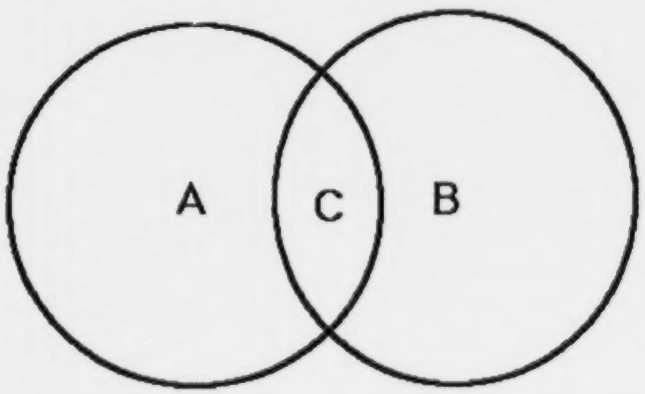
Venn Diagram

The Venn Diagram is made up of two or more overlapping circles. It is often used in mathematics to show relationships between sets. In language arts instruction, Venn Diagrams are useful for examining similarities and differences in characters, stories, poems, etc.

It is frequently used as a prewriting activity to enable students to organize thoughts or textual quotations prior to writing a compare/contrast essay. This activity enables students to organize similarities and differences visually .



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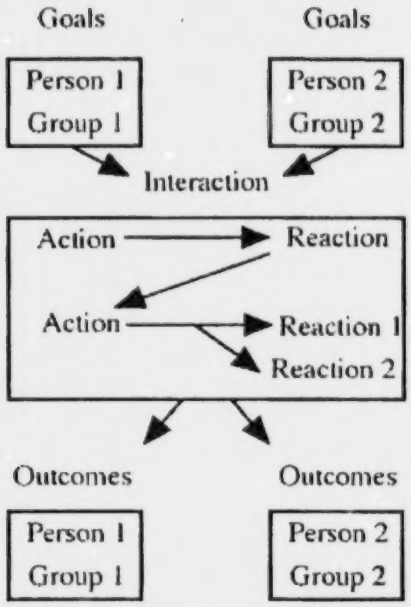
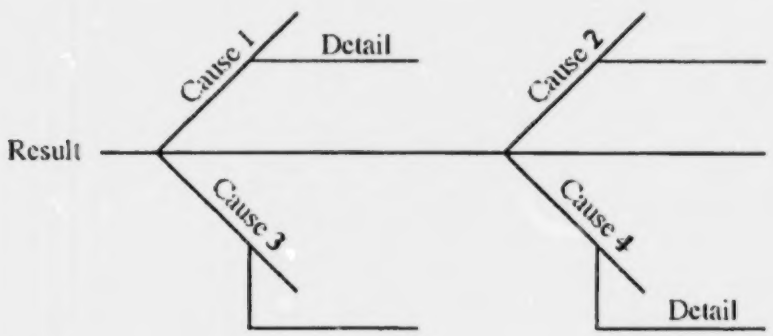


Used to show the nature of an interaction between persons or groups (Europeans settlers and American Indians). Key frame questions: Who are the persons or groups? What were their goals? Did they conflict or cooperate? What was the outcome for each person or group?

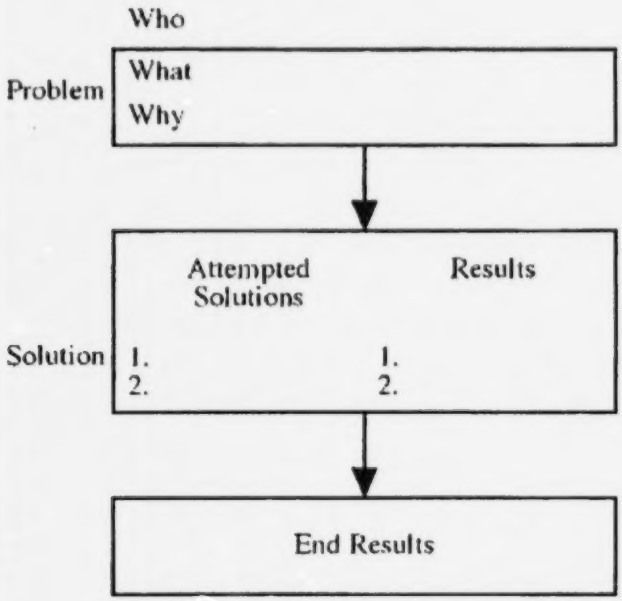
Fishbone Map



Used to show the causal interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities). Key frame questions: What are the factors that cause X ? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist?

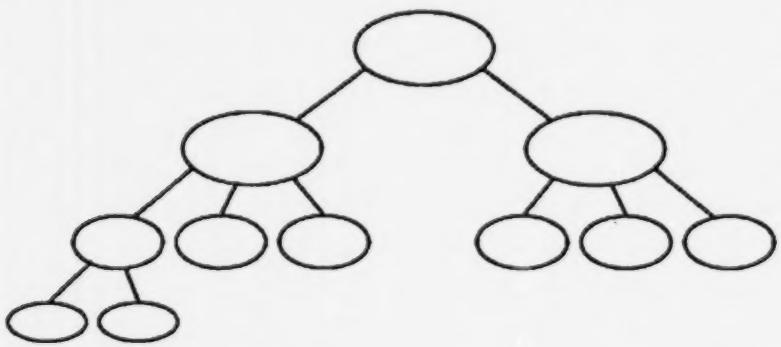
Cycle

Problem/Solution Outline



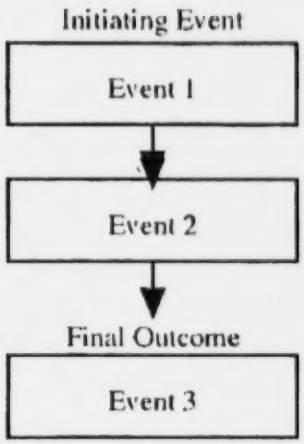
Used to represent a problem, attempted solutions, and results (the national debt). Key frame questions: What was the problem? Who had the problem? Why was it a problem? What attempts were made to solve the problem? Did those attempts succeed?

Network Tree



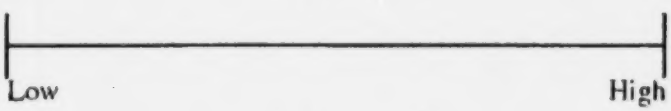
Used to show causal information (causes of poverty), a hierarchy (types of insects), or branching procedures (the circulatory system). Key frame questions: What is the superordinate category? What are the subordinate categories? How are they related? How many levels are there?

Human Interaction Outline



Used to describe the stages of something (the life cycle of a primate); the steps in a linear procedure (how to neutralize an acid); a sequence of events (how feudalism led to the formation of nation states); or the goals, actions, and outcomes of a historical figure or character in a novel (the rise and fall of Napoleon). Key frame questions: What is the object, procedure, or initiating event? What are the stages or steps? How do they lead to one another? What is the final outcome?

Continuum Scale



Used for time lines showing historical events or ages (grade levels in school), degrees of something (weight), shades of meaning (Likert scales), or ratings scales (achievement in school). Key frame questions: What is being scaled? What are the end points?

Compare/Contrast Matrix

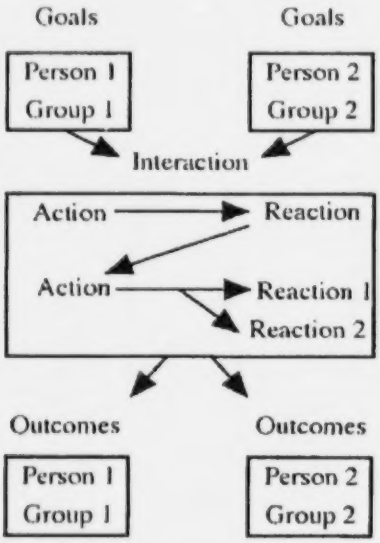
	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		

Used to show similarities and differences between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.). Key frame question: What things are being compared? How are they similar? How are they different?

Interaction Outline

Interaction Outline is used to show the nature of an interaction between persons or groups, such as the interaction between Europeans settlers and American Indians.

Key frame questions: Who are the persons or groups? What were their goals? Did they conflict or cooperate? What was the outcome for each person or group?



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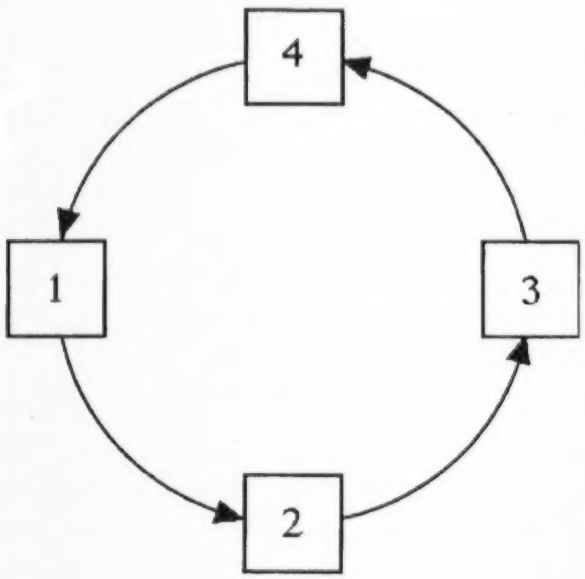
Cycle

A depiction of a Cycle attempts to show how a series of events interacts to produce a set of results again and again, such as the life cycle or a cycle of poor decisions.

Key frame questions: What are the main events in the cycle? How do they interact and return to the beginning again?



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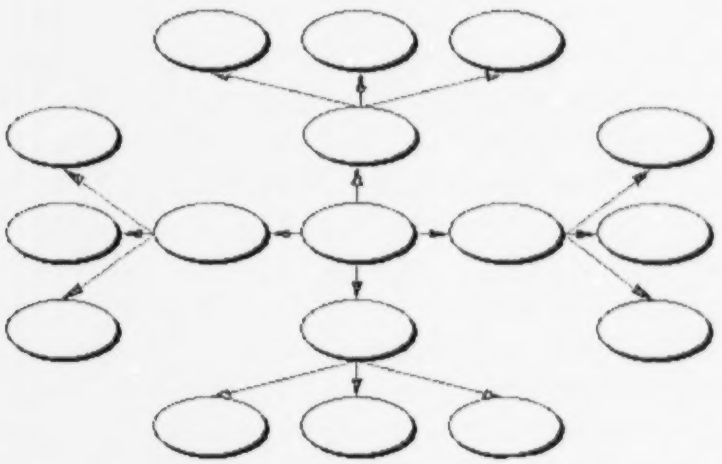
Clustering

Clustering is a nonlinear activity that generates ideas, images and feelings around a stimulus word. As students cluster, their thoughts tumble out, enlarging their word bank for writing and often enabling them to see patterns in their ideas. Clustering may be a class or an individual activity.



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Compare/Contrast

Comparison/Conrast is used to show similarities and differences.

Key frame questions: What are being compared? How are they similar? How are they different?

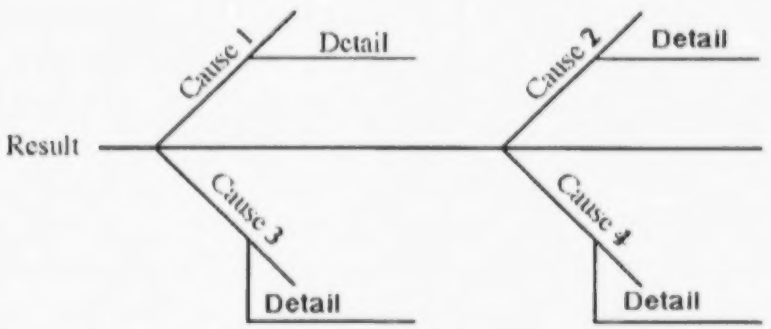
	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		

Return to main organizers page.

Fishbone Mapping

A Fishbone Map is used to show the causal interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities).

Key frame questions: What are the factors that cause X ? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist?



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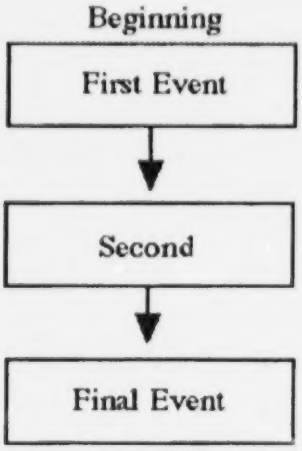
Chain of Events

Chain of Events is used to describe the stages of an event, the actions of character or the steps in a procedure.

Key questions: What is the first step in the procedure or initiating event? What are the next stages or steps? How does one event lead to one another? What is the final outcome?



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Organization/Address: c/o Bin Humanoid DeKalb County Schools 3770 N. Decatur Rd Decatur, GA 30032	Telephone: 678.676.0148 Fax: 678.676.0229 E-mail Address: WTH6194.@FC.DeKalb.K12.GA.US Date: 7/03

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